

Yarnall-Garrett House

HABS No. PA-1203

South side of State Route 3 (West Chester Pike),

.5 mile east of State Route 926 (Street Road)

Willistown Vicinity (Willistown Township)

Chester County

Pennsylvania

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1203

YARNALL-GARRETT HOUSE

Location: South side of State Route 3 (West Chester Pike),
.5 mile east of State Route 926 (Street Road),
Willistown Vicinity (Willistown Township),
Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Donald S. Jarvis, Edgemont, Pennsylvania.

Statement of Significance This early stone house, with date stones from 1727 and 1812, was the country house of an English Quaker, Amos Yarnall. The house has several additions.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Amos Yarnall, who died in 1789, built east end; inherited by his stepson Aaron Garrett; then his son Robert Garrett; and then by Albin Garrett; who sold 1873 to Wm. Etty who died 1899; when it was sold to Albin Garrett; whose exec. sold 1913 to Thomas G. Ashton; whose family sold to E.M. diZappola in 1945; who sold 1946 to Frank Fitts; who sold 1952 to Donald S. Jarvis, present owner.
2. Date of erection: The east section (three irregular bays) was built in 1727 as evident from the date stone which reads A^M. The west section (two bays) was added to the 1727 east section in 1812. The west section also has a date stone marked A^GR.
1812
3. Architect, builder, suppliers: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction: Original 1727 section consisted of two rooms with board partition, and was two-and-a-half stories.
5. Alterations and additions: A two-and-a-half-story, two-bay section was added to the original 1727 section in 1812. During the mid-nineteenth century a one-and-a-half-story wing was added to the east of the 1727 section. The roof of this addition was raised to accommodate a second story in the twentieth century. In the mid-twentieth century a one-and-a-half-story kitchen wing was added to the north of

the 1812 section. Also in the mid-twentieth century a porch was added across the south front of both the 1727 and 1812 sections and a porch was added to the north of the 1727 section. The north porch was later enclosed.

6. Important old views and references:

Views: Eleanor Raymond, Early Domestic Architecture of Pennsylvania, William Helburn, New York, 1931. See plates 32, 33, 145.

References: Sources of information to be found in Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Classified printed and manuscript files in Society under heading: Willistown Township, Lands.

Gilbert Cope, Genealogy of the Smedley Family, Wickersham Printing Co., Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1901. (includes 1901 photo of house on page facing 172).

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: The first part of the house (east end) was built by Amos Yarnall (1700-1789), an English Quaker who married Mary Ashbridge in 1727, the year on the date stone in the south wall. His second wife was Sarah, widow of Samuel Garrett, and her son, Aaron Garrett, inherited the house from his step-father. He built the 1812 west section at the time a son was married so the two families could live in the one house.

See photographs in the Raymond book for pictures of grill work, lately removed, which appears in a number of Chester County houses.

- C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None known.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The country house of an English Quaker, the stone structure has two early sections, one dating from 1727 and the other from 1812.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The original 1727 house is the two-and-a-half-story east section of three irregular bays. The two-and-a-half-story west section (two bays) was added

in 1812. There are also several additions. A one-and-a-half-story wing was added to the east of the 1727 section; this wing was later raised to two stories. A one-and-a-half-story wing was added to the north of the 1812 wing.

2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction: Random rubble stone.
4. Chimneys: Originally stone, but have been rebuilt in brick.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Few original doors have survived the many remodelings.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Original openings exist in the older sections; most windows on the first level are six-over-six light double-hung sash. New openings have been made for bathrooms, kitchen, etc.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roofs with asphalt shingles, with shed roof on wing to north of 1812 wing.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Some original cornice remains.
 - c. Dormers: There is one dormer above the kitchen wing that was added in the mid-twentieth century.
7. Porches: A one-story, shed roof porch was added across the south front of both the 1727 and 1812 sections. There is also a one-story, shed roof porch on the west side and one to the north of the 1727 section, which was later enclosed.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The original two-and-a-half-story house consisted of two rooms on each floor with board partitions running north to south. This area is now one large room on both the first and second floors. The original fireplaces and stairs have either been removed or remodeled. The two-

and-a-half-story 1812 wing added two more rooms on each floor which have now been converted into one large room on the first floor and one room with a bath on the second floor. The east addition contains one room on the first floor and one room with a bath on the second floor; the fireplaces have been remodeled in this section. The addition to the north of the 1812 section contains the present kitchen with a bedroom above. A porch to the north of the 1727 section has been enclosed and converted to a study. An entrance vestibule and stairs to the basement have been added to the west.

2. Stairways: The original stairway in the northwest corner of the 1727 house has been converted into closets; but the stairway in the southwest is still used although it has been rebuilt. There is a two-run stair in the northeast corner of the 1812 addition that is still used; this stairway continues up to the attic
3. Flooring: Modern flooring has been placed on top of the original.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Mostly replaced, but with old doors.
6. Trim: Mostly replaced.
7. Hardware: Mostly replaced, but with old hardware, or with reproductions.
8. Lighting: Electricity.
9. Heating: Oil heat.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: On slight slope; house faces south, swimming pool is located down the terrace in front of house.
2. Enclosures: None.
3. Outbuildings: Barn; there was originally a brick tunnel leading down the south terrace which was bricked-in during the mid-1950s.
4. Walks, driveways: Driveway leading to parking area north of house.
5. Landscaping, gardens: Lawn, modern plantings.